

AN

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY

IN

HARVARD, MASSACHUSETTS,

OCTOBER 22, 1882,

BY SETH CHANDLER.

WITH AN APPENDIX

BY SAMUEL A. GREEN, M. D.

BOSTON, MASS. :

GEORGE E. LITTLEFIELD,
Antiquarian Bookstore, 87 Cornhill.

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In the latter part of the year 1882, it was my privilege to supply the pulpit of the First Congregational Society in Harvard, for a few Sundays, while the parish was awaiting the time appointed for the installation of their minister, Mr. Maglathlin, to whom a call had been given and accepted. During this period, I was requested by a member of the society to prepare an *historical discourse* for the following Sunday, to which I assented. The delivery of the sermon, I supposed, would be the only publication which my hastily written performance would receive, but, a person outside of the parish and the town has requested its presentation in its present form to which, knowing its imperfection, I have reluctantly consented.

THE AUTHOR.

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DISCOURSE.

Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there forever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.—II CHRON., VII, 15, 16.

WE cannot but be aware that we live in an age of change. That mind is enlarging, directing the hand to new achievements, and guiding the life into new paths of wisdom, virtue and happiness. In every branch of science and of political economy: in every department of labor, new discoveries are being developed, and new facilities presenting themselves to our notice. Physical evolutions are less estranged from the common understanding, and scientific researches are received with increased familiarity by the general mind. The masses are daily more interested in themes that heretofore had appeared above the common reach, giving the dullest eyes to see that society is engaged in a healthy progress.

The pulpit has, however, been slow to sympathize with these changes, until within a comparatively brief period. It has not only been afraid that hasty improvements would produce fatal reactions, but that any innovation upon the creeds and customs of past ages would be fatal to the influence and life of pure religion. This fear is happily passing away, and the various Protestant denominations are coming to see that a more consistent form of faith, and a clearer method of its presentation

are demanded, in order that the ministrations of the sanctuary meet the wants of an advancing age. Much less than a century since it would have been accounted sacrilege to stray from the beaten paths of spiritual teaching, by introducing the wants of temporal life and health into a sermon, by attempting to prove the natural ability of man for mental and moral progress, by seeking, through the use of reason, to illustrate scripture truth, and certainly the thought must be ignored that physical science could be allowed to modify any forms of christian doctrine, or vary any preconceived faith of the believer. It was not even set down as gospel preaching when duties formed the theme; the social relations of life, the obligations of man to man, the reciprocal duties of families and communities, and all themes of like character were slurred as mere moral lecturing, as the filthy rags of righteousness, and destitute of religious vitality, as destitute of power to meet the wants of the spiritual life, as husks and muddy water to sustain a perishing body.

But people in these latter days do not feel satisfied with a reiteration of bodies of divinity — bodies without souls — with mere dogma salvation, with the worship of rituals and the like. They will accept the dogma as the helper of their faith, but by no means regard it the chief ingredient of a religious life, and they look upon rituals as signs and reminders of duty, not with the awe-struck devotion that a pagan devotee regards his idol, as though the ritual is at the bottom of all true religion, and the only instrument by which the doors of salvation may be opened to the trembling soul. On the other hand the idea seems now to prevail that pure religion is an outgrowth of the nature; that it is taught and helped by illustrations drawn from revelation, from the volume of nature and from the attributes and promises of the Creator, from everything that will touch the heart, cultivate the affections, elevate hope, dignify action, rectify

character and lead the soul to the worship of God as a universal Father, and to honor man as the child of that Father and as a member of a universal brotherhood. This change is not confined to what has been called the liberal denominations, but, in a measure, runs through protestantism.

Still, some of you may consider the discourse which I have prepared for this time and place, better adapted to the platform than the pulpit, nearer in accordance with the teaching of the Lyceum, than those of the sanctuary of worship; still, you will allow me to speak my word as I hold it good, and leave the criticisms that shall come out of it to subsequent consideration.

In accordance with a suggestion of one of your number, I propose to discourse upon the past condition of your town in general, your religious society in particular, its present aspects and future prospects, regretting that I am compelled to confine my thoughts and words to the few pages of an ordinary sermon.

Within about thirty-five years from the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, two contiguous townships were established in this region, the territory of which reached from beyond the present boundary line of New Hampshire, on the north, to the valley of the Nashua river on the south, containing nearly two hundred square miles. These towns bore the names of Lancaster and Groton. The territory which then formed the town of Lancaster, has by division, been made to comprise what is now a part of the two towns of Boylston, a part of Leominster, the entire towns of Sterling, Lancaster, Berlin, and Bolton and part of Harvard. The territory which was at first organized as Groton now comprises the towns of Pepperell, Groton, Shirley, and Ayer, and portions of Dunstable, Westford, Littleton, Harvard, Massachusetts, and Nashua, New Hampshire. The several towns named, that colonized from Lancaster and Groton, were not in-

incorporated, as townships, until after the close of the Indian hostilities, so common at an earlier period; yet, scattered families had commenced their settlements over a part of the region which these towns now combine, and were made to suffer from the depredations of the aborigines. When we contrast the situation of these settlements with our own happy homes we must confess that the "pleasant lines" which have fallen to us have come through the toils, tears and blood of an honored ancestry.

Notwithstanding the dearth of the means of temporal life, at this early period, the people must supply themselves with food and clothing, and would also enjoy the facilities of moral and mental instruction. The church and the school must not be forgotten, notwithstanding the prior claims of the temporal man.

Let us briefly consider the difficulties that were combined with these claims at this early period of your town's history, that you may mark the contrast between your cultivated farms and pleasant villages, and the wilderness settlements of your forefathers.

When the settlements began, animal productions were very scarce, and animal food but little known, except what were the hunter's spoils. And very small crops of grain — almost the sole reliance — were realized. And then how could this grain be converted to meal? At first only by the slow process of samp-mortars. For it was thirty years after the settlements were begun in Lancaster, and twelve years after they were commenced in Groton, that the first corn-mill was built in the latter territory. And that mill stood within the limits of what is now the town of Harvard. It was situated in a northern section of the town, and a mill stands there now; and, the surrounding territory bears the name of the "old mill district." The original structure was set up by John Prescott, then living at Lancaster, and Jonas Prescott, afterwards a resident of Groton.

A few years after the erection of this mill, Groton was destroyed by the Indians, but this structure, then situated in that town, so useful to the people, was passed over by the depredators without injury. This mill was for many years the only place, within a large region of territory, where grinding could be done. It was, therefore, in almost constant use by night and day. Indeed, so great was its press of work that the inhabitants of Groton were compelled to enact a law requiring the proprietor of the mill to set apart the second and sixth days of each week when grinding could be done only for the Grotonians.

Think, my brethren, what your fathers had to endure in the simple matter of having their grain converted to meal! Light carriages did not then exist, but those who had horses could lay their bags upon the backs of their animals, which then proved the most convenient method of transport. Yet this method was denied to all but the favored few who could keep horses. A large majority of the people had to pursue a different course. In winter ox-sleds and hand-sleds were used to some extent, and in summer, farm carts and wheelbarrows were brought into requisition. Many a load was thus borne over the uneven, half made roads, for a distance of from two to five miles, — while many another load was carried on the stalwart shoulders of the hardy yeomanry, at every season of the year. Through storms of rain and snow, over roads of mud and slush, the burdens were thus transported for weary miles, consuming in a single journey all the hours of daylight and frequently a part of the night. And what greatly increased and prolonged this irksome task was the amount of service demanded of one and the same mill. Two journeys were required more frequently than one, to accomplish the desired purpose. This shows in a small thing, how much labor and thought were demanded to secure the whole process of supplying the households with food.

This first requirement of the family, as a matter of course, devolved on the men, yet you are not to suppose that the other sex were excused from an equal share of toil and trial in upholding the life and progress of the new settlements. It was by their hands that the clothing was wrought. It is true they avoided many labors now, perhaps, unnecessarily sought and indulged. It is probable that many years had passed after the settlements in this town, (and others of a similar nature) had commenced, before the houses had rooms, east and west, to keep clean and furnish; there was little costly furniture daily to inspect and carefully adjust; little time required to study and practice *etiquette*, no dress fashions to copy, to fret the mind and enslave the body, and no frequent varying of the attire to claim the thought, tax the attention and weary the action of the life. For they lived, mostly, in rude, unfinished cottages, used household implements of the coarsest make, and wore, for clothing, their own home manufactures, fabrics that will perform the ends required by their makers. And here lay their chief toil, to convert the raw material as it came from the field and the flock into garments of use, comfort and comeliness and thus supply the second great temporal want of human existence. This constitutes a source of the highest praise for the mothers and daughters of early New England.

Until comparatively a recent period, it was the custom of our farmers to keep a few sheep by which to supply the "everyday wear" of the family, and not unfrequently their "Sunday suits." The bed material came from the same source.

It was also the aim of most of the farmers, of this early time, to cultivate a little flax that the summer clothing of the family might also be supplied. The work of the father and his sons was completed when the sheep were shorn of their fleeces, and the flax broken

and cleared from its rough stalks. This done, the work of the mother and the daughters found a place. Both the wool and the flax were converted into rolls by the slow and laborious practice of hand-carding. These rolls were spun into yarn and the yarn woven into cloth by hand-power machinery. At a subsequent period the breaking and the rolling were by water-power machinery, while the spinning and weaving were yet performed at the family hearth-stone.

The outfit of girls entering married life at that period, did not consist of gilt mirrors, costly pianos, and Turkey carpets ; but of hand-cards, flax-hetchels, spinning-wheels, warping-bars and looms. These were essentials in every household establishment, and the girl who was unskilled in the use of these implements was hardly considered worthy of the family relation. Let it however be remembered that the strength and health of the damsels of that day, trained in these onerous employments, were as much superior to what are enjoyed by modern women as the fabrics their hands wrought were superior, in durability, to the linsey-woolsey of this day, that passes under the specious name of superfine broadcloth.

Think, in your changed condition, of your mothers and their daughters of these early times. They enter their attics with cards in hand and attack the massive piles of wool and flax, or they ply the spinning-wheel with a gentle hum of music, an affected imitation of the last psalm-tune sung at church, or send forth the jolts of the lumbering loom, while in a vessel over the kitchen fire below gently boils an Indian pudding for the family dinner, and you have a partially wrought picture of the early times. To be sure the wheel and the loom did not create the musical harmony of the modern piano, yet they wrought out a work which ministered to the comfort of the family which, indeed, was largely essential to its very salvation.

The food and the clothing of the family thus supplied, by the joint labors of the household, we may suppose the people might be excused from any special effort, other than the supply of the temporal wants of the poor, until their lands should be cleared, their dwellings improved, and their farms brought into an enlarged state of cultivation, but the sons of the Pilgrims entertained no such belief. Simultaneously with an effort made to meet the wants of temporal life, the spiritual man presented a claim for his share of attention. Meager as were the resources of physical life, they must not forget the assembling of themselves together for social and divine worship. The settlers of this town could not ignore the claims of the sanctuary more than others. They must set up the public altar of devotion in the wilderness, however humble; and make it the place for their Sabbath meeting.

This town was incorporated in 1732, and probably a house of worship was very soon provided; of the certainty of this, however, I cannot declare, but the record states that a minister was called and settled, Oct. 10, 1733. He remained here until Sept. 7, 1757, a period of twenty-four years. Reckoning according to the service of ministers at the present day, this may seem a long term; but *then* ministers were settled for life, and it was thought almost as great sacrilege to break the connection between a minister and his parish as to dissolve that of husband and wife.

The present inhabitants of Harvard may well feel proud of an ancestry, that under the severest temporal privations could so brave the storms of physical want, as to find the means to set up a public altar of devotion, place upon it the Gospel candlestick and have it sweetly burning as an exemplar for all subsequent generations. But it was done. And, what is still better that, light has been kept brightly trimmed even to the present time,

the glory of every succeeding age of the town, burning out, it may be, the lives and strength of the successive ministers, that the souls of their people may have their way lighted to the kingdom of Heaven. And now, with your enlarged comforts and pecuniary ability, would you not blush to own that this light must be quenched and the altar removed or forsaken!

I suppose that it must have been a strange work to dismiss John Seccomb, their first minister, before he should finish his life-career; but, tradition has said that it was occasioned by a mutual disagreement between the parties, that could be removed in no other way. He had built a house and hoped to remain in his appointed work to the end of life, and was very reluctant to have the union dissolved. It has been said that he uttered, as a word of prophesy — which word I suppose arose from a grieved heart, or a vengeful spirit,—that the church in Harvard would never form a connection with a minister that would not be prematurely dissolved. Now the people who have composed the congregation in this place, during the hundred and fifty years of your church organization have had nine ministers, who all have been dismissed at their own request or at the requirement of their parishioners, before the end of their natural lives, excepting two who were removed by death.

After the dismissal of Mr. Seccomb, in 1757, the town settled, as its second minister, Rev. Joseph Wheeler, who remained here nine years, when he was dismissed. In 1769 Rev. Daniel Johnson was called to the Harvard pulpit. He had the reputation of being a very eloquent preacher, but he died in 1777, after a ministry of eight years. Rev. Ebenezer Grosvenor was next inducted into the sacred office in this place. He was consecrated to the work in 1782, but died in 1788 after a ministry of six years. Rev. Mr. Blanchard, who had a settlement here for a time, resigned his place on account of ill

health. Now I know not what number of the other ministers, who have been settled here, would have remained for life, had the choice been left with themselves, but I do believe that long ministries, life ministries, are most useful, effectual and fruitful of good results. It takes time to secure a proper acquaintance between a pastor and his people; and, when a minister feels that he has a home for life, he gathers around himself friends and associations that become dearer by every year of union, that seem like a family circle that can be removed only by death. Skeptical as people are on this subject, I believe that the change, which has of late been so much the order of the day, has come nearly to its height, that it will soon reach a crisis, and that christians will return to their faithfully tried ways, and believe that friends proved by time are better and should be cherished.

It appears from a record made by Mr. Blanchard that the united ministries of the first four divines, in this place, amounted only to forty-seven years. Then a new era seemed to have commenced by the settlement of Rev. William Emerson. This bright and shining light of his day was born at Concord, Mass., May 6, 1769. He was a son of the Rev. William Emerson of Concord, and the grandson of Rev. Joseph Emerson of Malden, and had many other relationships in the ministerial line. He was settled in 1792 and remained here until 1799, only seven years.

By a fair compromise between the town of Harvard and the First Congregational Society in Boston, Mr. Emerson was dismissed by the first and became the minister of the second. He died at Boston, May 12, 1811. He was the father of the late Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was born at Boston, May 25, 1803.

The next that was called to a pastorate in this town was Rev. Stephen Bemis, who was settled in 1801, but fulfilled a brief ministry of only six years when he was

dismissed. The rupture was caused by the preaching of a political sermon on the day of the annual Fast. Tradition saith that the people were so enraged that some of them threatened him with an immediate expulsion from the pulpit, before he had left the steps of the meeting-house. He, of course deemed it "expedient that he go away."

The scholarship of Mr. Bemis was of a high order. He was prepared for the ministry before Theological Schools were much in use. Young men, after leaving college, were required to spend a season of study with some noted clergyman before receiving orders. The celebrated Dr. Lathrop of West Springfield, received under his instruction many students of this kind, among whom was Mr. Bemis. He was heard to say that the Rev. Jesse Appleton, afterward President of Bowdoin College, and Stephen Bemis, afterward minister of this society, were the most finished scholars that ever passed under his instruction.

Mr. Bemis was succeeded by the Rev. Warren Fay, who also remained six years, when he was removed to Charlestown where he passed the rest of his ministry.

Rev. Mr. Blanchard was the next settled minister in this town, and he occupied the pulpit for seven years when, on account of ill-health, he was obliged to retire. He was well qualified both by nature and education, to sustain and honor the office of a New England divine.

Rev. Washington Gilbert succeeded to the ministry of Mr. Blanchard, and his pastorate was continued to 1855, a period of twenty-four years! A long ministry for the people of Harvard to experience and for the times in which it occurred. It was highly creditable both to minister and people; and, probably it would have been to the greater credit and profit of both had the union been continued until the death of the incumbent.

Mr. Gilbert was a christian, a scholar and a gentle-

man. He lived in the practice of a wise and consistent economy, and was thus enabled to ease the pecuniary burdens of an overtaxed people. His goodness was largely appreciated where he was best known, and hence his ministry, in an age of fickleness and change, was longer than any of his predecessors except the first. I enjoyed the fellowship of this worthy man, during the larger part of his ministry, and had an interchange of pulpit services with him on fifty-two separate occasions.

From the settlement of Mr. Emerson unto the end of the ministry of Mr. Gilbert, which we may regard the second era in your ecclesiastical history, was fifty years; this added to the several ministries of the first era,—forty-seven years,—makes the whole length of time, when this parish had a settled incumbent in the pulpit, ninety-seven years. It shows the average length of the nine clergymen, who officiated during this time, less than eleven years. And reckoning from the time of the incorporation of the town in 1732, to the close of Mr. Gilbert's ministry in 1855,—one hundred and twenty-three years,—must have left the pulpit without a settled incumbent for the space of twenty-six years.

It may be remarked here that from the beginning of the settlement of Mr. Emerson to the end of 1855, there appears to have been a general decline in Calvinism in the religious belief of the people of this town; which change, opened the way here, and in most of the New England towns, for the great separation of the Congregational body into Trinitarian and Unitarian parties, which occurred in the first half of the present century. But the religious revolution in this town was more easily borne than in most places where it occurred, because it was effected without litigation, personal strife or neighborhood bickerings. It seemed rather the wish of all that each should enjoy his religious rights and privileges without molestation. To be sure

it was not without regret that the old landmarks were removed by a church secession, but it was quietly effected. A new organization was established, a new altar set up, and a new ministry employed, and to the credit of the town be it named, the divided parties have gone along, side by side, with an unusual degree of harmony.

The first minister settled by the seceding society — Rev. George Fisher — was allowed to remain in office during his life. His ministry was quiet and effective, and he had the respect of the inhabitants of the town and of the neighborhood, as far as he was known. He died the oldest member in his ministerial association, and his memory is reverently cherished by his surviving friends, now fast passing away.

Since the departure of Mr. Gilbert from the town, you have had six clergymen established in your parish, who have walked in and out before you as spiritual teachers, whose united ministries have amounted to about twenty-five years. The ministries of Messrs. Barber and Goddard were especially distinguished for energy and effectiveness. The first of these has secured to himself a reputation which any clergyman might desire to covet, and the last proved his devotion to your interests when you had been deprived of your church building by fire. His labors were without stint or weariness to secure the means for erecting this beautiful temple now the place of your weekly gathering. Long may it stand, a memorial of his fidelity, and of your exertions to keep alive the ordinances of the Gospel in this sacred place, on this consecrated Moriah of your own and your fathers' worship.

When I consider the forty years, and more, of my indirect connection with this parish, which has been maintained by exchange with your ministers, and social intercourse with your people, scenes of happy remembrance pass before my inward vision, calling up circumstances

pleasing and profitable for reflection, and faces long since departed from outward sight. It is like passing through a gallery of portraits the resemblance of men and women we honored and loved in life, who though dead seem to speak. The venerable Jabez Hapgood, Dea. Fairbanks, Enoch Perkins, the Whitneys, the Hills, and many others, including the names of Bigelow and Gardner who led in the praises of the sanctuary; "our fathers where are they?" All buried beneath the thickly piled clods of the valley, while their spirits have arisen to a union with kindred spirits to worship in a higher temple made without hands.

Dear brethren and sisters, your past has been glorious, and Harvard has been honored among sister towns in your vicinity. This honor has been largely secured by the efforts of bygone generations. By their labors they cleared, fenced and reduced your sterile hills to farms of thrifty cultivation. The orchard blooms on what were once rocky and profitless soils; your present advantages, and their glorious promise, is a result of the patient industry and consistent economy, practiced by fathers and mothers who wrought not for themselves only, but also for coming generations. And while they toiled for your physical comforts they forgot not your spiritual and mental wants. As I have intimated, they greatly encroached upon the necessities of temporal life that they might have wherewith to erect an altar of worship, they wrought equally hard to set up the first public school, and with what struggles, and under what privations a simple farming community must have labored to keep the common school along from year to year in these early times. They must have food and clothing it is true, but they would submit to the hardest fare and wear the coarsest garb, rather than neglect these two glorious institutions, the church and school.

Now, dear brethren, when you remember that you

have entered into the reward of these industries, and this economy of past generations, can you fail to believe the words of the Psalmist as descriptive of your own condition: "The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, yea I have a goodly heritage."

Yea, you ought to do more than this. You should show your thankfulness by deeds as well as words. Your thriving farms, the general healthy appearance of all your temporal movements, go to prove that the physical necessities that tried your fathers belong to a past history. Your school system is under such wise arrangement that you need no exhortation in that regard; but, can we with equal positiveness declare that the altar fires of your sanctuary will never fail through a want of feeding? Have you never, yourselves, entertained a fear that what the pilgrim settlers of New England prized so highly, labored so hard to sustain, and which was a source of such rich blessings to their descendants, may be neglected and in a measure suffered to die out by later generations? The question is worthy your serious consideration.

Perhaps some of you have thought ere now, to ask what the preacher's sermon has to do with his text. I will tell you, that here is where my text comes in, "Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place, for now have I chosen and sanctified this house that my name may be there forever, and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." These are words of Solomon uttered at the dedication of his temple at Jerusalem, and they were followed by a threat that if the people failed of duty, they would lose the advantages of right doing, and open to themselves the retribution of slothfulness and neglect.

You have here one of the most elegant and convenient of church buildings, standing on the sanctified spot

where your fathers worshipped. It is yours without the clog of a lingering parish debt, and cannot require a great sacrifice of earthly goods to keep the ordinances of religion moving forward as in olden time. You are about to settle a new minister, and I pray you to help him help *you*. Encourage him by a constant attendance at the seasons of weekly worship, and encourage him by meeting your pecuniary engagements with him, promptly, as you have agreed to do, and as he has reason to expect you will. Then will his heart be easy and his brain kept steady. Present circumstances go to show that this village, in the centre of your town, will always remain the centre of your operations; that little opportunity can be offered to build up an outside community to draw away the population from the ancient place of your assemblies. Improve the privileges thus happily presented, and you will live, grow, and bless coming generations as you have been blessed of those that have gone; but, if you neglect your duty, as a religious body, you will fail, fade and die, yet it can be no other than death by suicide! You have too much intelligence, too much mental energy, too much regard for the memory of your race, for your individual honor and for the honor of your town, in fine, you will incur too great sacrifices, by allowing a supineness that will bring upon you, as a society, a lingering, suicidal death!

I have spoken of the past, and of the present, and will close with a few words on your future prospects. Two encouraging thoughts present themselves for consideration. The first is, you are about to settle a new minister. I do not know him but I have heard that he has been a member of the church and society of the Rev. W. H. Cudworth of East Boston. That, of itself, is a recommendation; for he must, under the circumstances, have been under an influence that will assist to

make a successful pastorate. I trust that he may come to you prepared, by outside organizations, to give effect to his pulpit labors, to interest in lay action, and thus unite a larger number of hands in the outward work of truth and grace; increasing the love of all for the sabbath and the sanctuary; that is what you want, and what all our parishes want to make them efficient. Now if he attempts to do all this, pray help him. Don't allow him to be a committee of one to plan and execute everything, leaving you all mere lookers on, but when his hands are stretched out until they shall be weary, come up on either side of him, as Aaron and Hur came up on either side of Moses, to stay his tired hands and encourage his fainting heart, and you will not only help to a general victory for your parish, but also do a great work of spiritual pleasure and profit for yourselves. The other thought of encouragement, to which I would call your attention relates to the free classical school, recently established in this place. Your minister elect I understand is a practical teacher of youth, and possibly may be a helper, outside if not inside of this institution, while, perchance, he may receive still greater help therefrom. The very fact that such an institution exists in your midst, well funded for support, is, in itself, a circumstance which you cannot but appreciate. The church and the school have ever been handmaids in the enlightenment, liberty, happiness and glory of mankind. I predict, that with a proper share of your personal sympathy and assistance, you will be efficiently favored by both in coming time.

If I have been rightly informed, Col. Bromfield an English gentleman, removed to Harvard at an early period, and purchased the venerable mansion which had been erected by the first minister of the town. The house was recently destroyed by fire, and the new school building occupies its site. That school has been endowed by

the widow of the late Rev. Mr. Blanchard, who was a granddaughter of Col. Bromfield. His family descendants lived after him in this mansion until its destruction. Among these was the venerable Professor Pearson, who filled an important position in the literary history of this commonwealth. His wife was a daughter of Col. Bromfield and he passed his last years in this town and here died. In his early life he was the preceptor of Byfield Academy, and afterward the principal of Andover Academy; subsequently he had a professorship in Harvard College, and was at length an efficient agent in the establishment of the Theological School at Andover, and for a short time a professor there. But he came to this town to pass his last years. He had two sons who also lived here until, or near to, the time of their death, and a daughter, the last of her race who, as we have said, remembered the town by her beneficence. Let all these things stimulate you to preserve the character, and encourage the progress of your town, by giving freely to sustain the institutions of religion.

L. of C.

A P P E N D I X .

The following sketch of the early history of Harvard has been kindly furnished by the Hon. Samuel A. Green, M. D., of Boston, from materials collected by him for his History of Groton now in preparation. A large portion of Harvard once formed a part of Groton and the two towns are closely connected in their history. Much information, historical and genealogical, of interest to the inhabitants of Harvard may be found in Dr. Green's three volumes already published, viz : "Groton Records," "Groton Epitaphs," and "Groton during the Indian Wars;" and in Rev. Mr. Chandler's recently printed History of Shirley, Massachusetts.

PUBLISHER.

HISTORICAL APPENDIX

BY

SAMUEL A. GREEN, M. D.

The town of Harvard was made up from portions of Groton, Lancaster and Stow, and incorporated on June 29, 1732. The petition for the township was presented to the General Court nearly two years before that time. In the Journal of the House of Representatives (pages 84, 85), October 9, 1730, there is recorded:

A Petition of *Jonas Houghton, Simon Stone, Jonathan Whitney, and Thomas Wheeler*, on behalf of themselves, and on behalf and at the desire of sundry of the Inhabitants on the extream parts of the Towns of *Lancaster, Groton* and *Stow*, named in the Schedule thereunto annexed; praying, That a Tract of Land (with the Inhabitants thereon, particularly described and bounded in said Petition) belonging to the Towns above-mentioned, may be incorporated and erected into a distinct Township, agreeable to said Bounds, for Reasons mentioned. Read, together with the said Schedule, and *Ordered*, That the Petitioners serve the Towns of *Lancaster, Groton* and *Stow* with Copies of the Petition, that they may shew Cause (if any they have) on the first *Thursday* of the next Session, why the Prayer thereof may not be granted.

Sent up for Concurrence.

The original copy of this petition is now probably lost; but in the first volume (page 53) of "Ancient Plans Grants &c." among the Massachusetts Archives, is a rough plan of Harvard, with a list of the petitioners for the township, which may be the "Schedule" referred to in the extract from the printed journal. It appears from this document that, in forming the new

town, 4,830 acres of land were taken from the territory of Groton; and with the tract were nine families, including six by the name of Farnsworth. This section comprised the district, known even now as "the old mill," where Jonas Prescott had in very early times a mill for grinding and sawing. The heads of these families were Jonathan Farnsworth, Eleazer Robbins, Simon Stone, Jr., Jonathan Farnsworth, Jr., Jeremiah Farnsworth, Eleazer Davis, Ephraim Farnsworth, Reuben Farnsworth, and [torn] Farnsworth, who had petitioned the General Court to be set off from Groton. In the same document similar statistics are found in regard to Lancaster and Stow.

Eleazer Davis, one of the petitioners, was in the famous Lovewell's Fight, on May 8, 1725, at Pequawket, now within the limits of Fryeburg, Maine. In the Journal of the House of Representatives (page 42), June 15, 1738, is entered:

A Petition of *Eleazer Davis of Harvard* in the County of *Worcester*, praying the Consideration of the Court on Account of his Sufferings and Services, particularly the Wounds and Smart received in the Fight under the Command of the late Capt. *Lovewell*, against the Indian Enemy at *Pigwacket*.

Read and *Ordered*, That *John Russell*, and *Robert Hale*, Esqrs; Mr. *Moodey*, and Mr. *Terry*, be a Committee to consider the said Petition, and report what may be proper to be done thereon.

On the following day Mr. Russell, the chairman of the Committee, reported an order that:

The Sum of *four Pounds* per Annum of the new tenor Bills, be granted and allowed to be paid out of the publick Treasury for the space of five Years to the Petitioner *Eleazer Davis*, to commence from the first Day of this Instant *June*, by way of Stipend or Pension, on Account of the Wounds and Smart received as within mentioned.

Sent up for concurrence.

The next document relating to the formation of the town is found among the Massachusetts Archives (CXIV. 6-8), substantially the same, without doubt, as the original petition, and is as follows:

To his Excellency Jonathan Belcher Esqr. Capt General and Governour in Chief the Honble The Council and the Honourable House of Representatives of His Majestys Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England in General Court Assembled by Adjournment Decembr. 16 1730.

The Memorial of Jonas Houghton Simon Stone Jonathan Whitney and Thomas Wheeler

Humbly sheweth That upon their Petition to the Great and Honourable Court in October last [the 9th] praying that a Certain Tract of Land belonging to Lancaster Stow and Groton with the Inhabitants thereon may be erected into a Distinct and Separate Township (and for Reasons therein Assigned) your Excellency and Honours were pleased to Order that the petitioners Serve the Towns of Lancaster Groton and Stow with a Copy of their said Petition that they may shew Cause if any they have on the first Thursday of the next Sessions why the prayers thereof may not be granted.

And for as much as this great and Honble. Court now Sitts by Adjournment and the next Session may be very Remote And your Memorialists have attended the Order of this Honble Court in serving the said Several Towns with Copys of the said Petition And the Partys are attending and Desirous the hearing thereon may be brought forward ye former order of this Honl Court notwithstanding

They therefore most humbly pray your Excellency & Honours would be pleased to Cause the hearing to be had this present Session and that a Certain day may be assigned for the same as your Excellency & Honours in your great wisdom & Justice shall see meet.

And your Memorialists as in Duty bound Shall Ever pray

JONAS HOUGHTON
SIMON STON JUNER
JONATHAN WHITNEY
THOMAS WHEELER

In the House of Reptives. Decr 17 1730

Read and in Answer to this Petition Ordered That the Petrs give Notice to the Towns of Lancaster Groton and Stow or their Agents that they give in their Answer on the twenty ninth Inst. why the Prayer of the Petition within referred to may not be granted

Sent up for Concurrence

J QUINCY Spkr :

In Council Dec. 18, 1730; Read & Concur'd

J WILLARD Secr'y

In the Journal of the House of Representatives (page 45), June 29, 1732, the following entry is made:

A Bill Entitled *An Act for erecting a new Town within the County of Worcester by the Name of Harvard.*

By this Act the town was incorporated, and so named in honor of the founder of Harvard College, perhaps at the suggestion of Jonathan Belcher, Governor of the Province at that time, and a graduate of the College. The engrossed Act on parchment is still preserved in the office of the Secretary of State, and the following is a copy of it. It will be noticed that the name of the town is left blank, except in the title, where it was written by Secretary Willard. It was not unusual in this kind of legislation at that period to leave the name of a town blank in the Act of Incorporation, when it passed the General Court; and it subsequently was filled in by the Governor, or at his order.

Anno Regni Regis Georgii Secundi Quinto & Sexto

An Act for erecting a New Town within the county of Worcester, by
the name of Harvard

Whereas the Inhabitants of the extream parts of the Towns of Lancaster Groton and Stow have laboured under much difficulty and inconvenience by reason of their remoteness from the places of publick Worship in the Towns to which they respectively belong, & have supported the Cost and Charge of preaching among them for several years past without any Consideration from their Towns, and have addressed this Court for Relief, & that they may be set off a distinct township by themselves

Be it therefore Enacted by His Excellency the Governour, Council and Representatives in General Court assembled & by the authority of the same that the Lands in the extream parts of the Towns of Lancaster Groton and Stow as the same are hereafter bounded and described be and hereby are Set off, & Constituted a separte & distinct Township by the name of Harvard vizt. begining at the Southerly End of the Causeway, near the House of Samuel Wilson in Lancaster and from thence running North West and by West till the line meets with Lancaster [Nashua] River, & from said Cause Way running South East & by East to Lancaster East bounds then running Northerly in the East Bounds of Lancaster till it comes to Beaver Brook, then bounding on said Brook till it comes to Littleton Bounds, and then running on said Littleton line near to the Northwest corner thereof vizt. so far as that a West North West Line shall leaye the dwelling house of James Stone in Groton six perch to the Northward, and continuing the same Course to Lancaster River aforesaid, excepting Coyacus ffarm or so much thereof as shall fall within the

bounds Above said; and to bound West on said River and that the Inhabitants of the said lands as before bounded and described be and hereby are vested with all the powers privileges and Immunities which the Inhabitants of any Town in this province are or by Law ought to be vested with

provided that the ffreeholders and other Inhabitants of the said Town Settle a learned and Orthodox Minister among them within the space of two years and also erect an House for the publick Worship of God

and Be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid that the afore-said Town of be and hereby is Declared to be within the County of Worcester, Any Law Usage or Custom to the contrary notwithstanding

1732 June 20th. This Bill having been read three several times in the House of Representatives passed to be Enacted

1732 June 21st.

J QUINCY Spkr

1732 June 29 This Bill having been read three several Times in Council passed to be Enacted

J WILLARD Secry

By His Excellency the Governr

June 29, 1732 I consent to the Enacting of this Bill

J BELCHER

In the Journal of the House of Representatives (page 26), June 6, 1747, is

A Petition of the Town of *Harvard*, praying the Fine imposed on them the last Year for not sending a Representative may be remitted, for the Reasons mentioned.

Read and *Ordered*, That this Petition be considered on Tuesday next at ten o'Clock before Noon.

In the same Journal (page 29), June 9, it is recorded:

The House according to the Order of the Day entred into the Consideration of the Petition of the Representative [Daniel Pierce] of *Harvard*, as entred the sixth Currant, and *Ordered*, That the sum of *ten Pounds* be allowed the Town of *Harvard*, in Answer to the Prayer of the Petition.

Sent up for Concurrence.

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